

Shipmate October 2021
Duke Longworth
28 July 2021

Summer is nearing the end! If July and August were anything like June this year will be a real scorcher! I really like the fall! You likely remember some of my fond memories of fall in the Yard: the leaves turning color, cool days, the warpaint on Tecumseh, and the football games! This year we have our 50th reunion, so this is a very special year! I hope to see you there!

Our 50th Reunion started on September 30th! As I write this column 472 Classmates and 467 Guests had registered for the reunion and an additional 81 classmates indicated that will register! This promises to be one of the most attended reunions for our class! I know there are many activities to attend and much to celebrate. One of my company-mates whom we have encouraged to join us at earlier reunions is registered! I surely hope he attends as it has been too long since we, 15 / 36 Company-mates saw him!

By the time you receive this column we, the Great USNA Class of '71, will know whom our new Vice President is! The election was held during August. Congratulations to our new Vice President!



{ (L-R) Charlie Mann '64, Duke, and Bill Weissner '66

Here's a note from yours truly! I started my retirement "job" January 2018 as Scoutmaster, BSA Troop 408 in Virginia Beach. My Eagle Scout son, Michael II, joined the troop in September 1996. For one year I was an assistant scoutmaster followed by 20 years as the committee chair, and now as Scoutmaster. The billet keeps me thinking and planning on a frequent basis. And I get to sleep under the stars in a tent about eight times each year. This does not compare to camping with our Marine classmates, but it certainly is not like sleeping in my own bed! My job is made easier by two fellow USNA grads: **Charlie Mann '64** and **Bill Weissner '66**. Charlie and Bill are all-around masters of the trade who help me keep the troop moving forward with advancements and camping skills. Below is a photo of Charlie and Bill with me at a recent Troop 408 Court of Honor. I am most grateful for their help and advice!

With sadness I am passing along information regarding two classmates who passed away since my last column.

Steve Grames passed away July 12th after battling lung cancer for about three years. Steve entered USNA from Perrysburg, Ohio. After six years of active duty as a Naval Officer he worked for the Federal Government for 35 years until his retirement. Steve then worked another ten years as an attendant and manager in the parking division of the Town of Bethany Beach. Steve recently celebrated his 72nd birthday and his 49th wedding anniversary with his wife Allyson. He was well-known for his analytical skills, problem solving, managerial skills, and most of all for his dedication to Allyson and to their families. Steve was cremated and will be inurned in the Naval Academy Columbarium.

John "Jack" L. Balcom passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, June 22nd at his home in Merrimack, NH. Jack entered USNA from Newton, MA. Upon graduation he served six years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He subsequently earned his Master of Science in Engineering degree from University of Southern California. He then had career as a logistics engineer. Jack represented District Hillsborough 21 in the New Hampshire House of Representatives from 2014-2016, serving as Vice Chair of Education for the 2015 legislative session. Additionally, he served as a Merrimack Village District Commissioner. Jack an active member of the community over the years, coaching youth soccer and performing in local theater and concerts. Jack is survived by his wife Marie (Mendelow) Balcom; his mother, Jeanne Balcom; daughter Lindsey and son Jon; and six grandchildren. A graveside committal service was held at the NH Veteran's Cemetery on Wednesday, 30 June.

Too soon, it is time to close. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for good health, especially continuing protection from the COVID-19 virus, healing when needed, and safety in travels. The pandemic highlighted that **today** is the gift of "the present" and life is precious and too short! There is not time to gladden the

hearts of those who travel with us. Love passionately, give and share your blessings generously with others – as we are richly blessed so may we richly bless others. Our leadership at home, in our social circles, and in daily routines is vital to maintaining our nation's constitutional republic. Now is the time to shape the future of our great nation as we strive for a more perfect union. There is plenty of work remaining as we increase our wisdom! Time, tide and column due dates wait for no man!

Duces Virum, Duke